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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6566
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1752
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ FEB LIMA 3260
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 2792
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 8765
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 3864
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 1938
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3445
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 001393

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: WEEKLY ELECTION ROUNDUP

REF: A. BOGOTA 1150 AND 849 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. BOGOTA 1327

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES MILTON DRUCKER;
REASONS 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (U) Election updates for February 6-10.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Uribe Campaigns for Congressional Candidates: President Uribe announced he will campaign for Congressional candidates. In an interview with Ahora magazine, Uribe said he "can't be absent from the elections" and needs to "participate" in Congressional elections to ensure an Uribista majority in Congress. To some extent, this is a reconsideration by the Uribe re-election team of an earlier decision to keep the President above the fray.

[1](#)3. (U) House and Senate Candidate Registration End: Registration for the March Congressional elections closed on February 7. Twenty-two parties will compete for 102 seats in the Senate and over 400 parties for 166 seats in the House (Ref B). Candidates and parties have until February 25 to modify their lists. While most party lists are finalized, there remains some jostling for positions and top spots.

[1](#)4. (U) The Continuing Saga of Rocio Arias: According to press reports, Rocio Arias has joined Senator Carlos Moreno de Cano's eponymous political party after being expelled from Senator Mario Uribe's Colombia Democratica party last week for paramilitary ties. At Arias' request, Moreno changed his list to allow preferential voting, which means voters can cast ballots for Arias personally rather than just for Moreno's party; this change will likely ensure Arias' election. Senator Uribe has promised to return the 20 million pesos (approximately USD 9,000) Arias gave Colombia Democratica to cover election costs.

[1](#)5. (C) Conservative Leader Holguin to Run for President in 2010: While registering the Conservative Party Senate list, Party President Carlos Holguin announced his intention to run for President in 2010. Holguin, a Senator whom many believe is past his political prime, said he would not accept a

position in the next Uribe Administration, but would use his position as President of the Conservative Party to communicate to the voters his vision for the future of Colombia. Holguin, who generally represents the "old guard," could undermine Conservative efforts to appeal to younger voters, both now and in 2010, if he insists on staying at center stage and fails to groom the next generation of leaders.

¶6. (U) Claudia Blum Will Not Run for Senate: Senate President Claudia Blum, who held the second spot on Cambio Radical's Senate list, announced that she will not run for Senate. Blum will either take a position in Uribe's next cabinet and/or run for Mayor of Cali in 2007. Blum is a top vote getter from Valle Del Cauca Department, where Cali is located.

¶7. (U) Seven Retired Generals Running for Congress: Seven relatively recently retired generals are running for Congress, three for the Senate and three for the House. While they are running on different party lists, most are part of Uribista parties and share common goals: supporting Uribe's Democratic Security agenda and increasing military pensions and salaries. In total, 12 former members of the armed forces are seeking office this year. This is the largest number of former military to run for Congress in Colombian history.
DRUCKER